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Note verbale dated 27 December 2016 from the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and, with reference to the communication dated 26 July 2016, jointly submitted by the Permanent Missions of the State of Kuwait and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, has the honour to state the following:

All activities and patrolling of vessels of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman are conducted in accordance with the international law of the sea and the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as in conformity with its rights and obligations. Accordingly, the baseless claims raised in the above-mentioned communication are categorically rejected.

The geographical coordinates referred to in the above-mentioned communication, namely, 28°58'63" N 49°06'16" E, describe positions where the boundaries of the exclusive economic zones between Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have not yet been delimited, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a coastal State with the longest coast on the Persian Gulf, reserves its rights to continue its activities under the international law of the sea.

Moreover, as indicated in the above-mentioned communication, the boundaries of the continental shelf and exclusive economic zones adjacent to the divided zone have not yet been delimited. Therefore, as previously declared, the Islamic Republic of Iran does not recognize any claim of exclusive sovereign rights to seabed and subsoil resources in the concerned areas before the delimitation of the exclusive economic zones of the countries concerned.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, based on its principled and long-standing position, has always expressed its readiness to conduct separate bilateral negotiations with the Governments of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in order to delimit its maritime boundaries adjacent to the divided zone.

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The Islamic Republic of Iran has always pursued in good faith a policy of friendship and good neighbourliness towards all neighbouring countries in the Persian Gulf region and, on the basis of this fundamental policy, expects the neighbouring countries to avoid raising issues and concepts that are both baseless and counterproductive.

The Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations would appreciate it if the Secretary-General could have the present note verbale circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 73 (a), and published in the next issue of the *Law of the Sea Bulletin*.